



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

may be applied equally to the sinking or bending of almost any object, from the sun to a dying warrior or a tree (see Vigfusson's Dic., page 276). Hence, neither rendering does violence to the meaning of the verb.

Hnit is rendered, as we have already seen, by 'thrust.' Concerning this word, too, there is some difference of opinion. In Vigfusson we find *hnit* rendered as "forging; poet., the clash of battle," with a reference to our poem. In this connection it would be more properly rendered simply by 'clash,' or perhaps better by 'din.'

If *din* be accepted as the meaning of *hnit*, it would seem to follow almost as a necessity that *firða fit* be translated as battle-array, since to associate the bending of men's feet with the *din* of spears would form a very bold figure, founded on a very slight resemblance. With a modern poet this argument would certainly hold true, but in criticising Old Norse poetry we must not be governed at all by modern canons of art, remembering always that what would now be considered a blemish might in the tenth century have received unqualified approval. Again, if spear-*din* be regarded as a simple paraphrase for battle, the appropriateness of the figure becomes very much more apparent. (That *fleina hnit* may mean battle, cf. the following figures: "*vigelds-prym-rögnir*," *din* of swords or spears, battle. Egil. chap. 58, 1; "*sverð-dynr*," sword-*din*, battle, Vigf.'s Dic., p. 610).

The *Lexikon Poeticum* renders *hnit* very much as Vigfusson does, but without explaining clearly the force of the figure employed; the result of the figure, not its working, is shown in the rendering: *collisio*, *conflictio*, *fleina hnit*, *spiculorum collisio*, *pugna*. From this we also derive additional authority for rendering *fleina hnit* battle. The Latin translation, contained in the A. M. edition of the Saga, Copenhagen, 1809, gives practically the same result as the above, namely:

Decidit virorum pes
Ad hastarum collisionem.

In the face of these three authorities I should have no hesitation in accepting the rendering of *fit* by 'foot,' were it not for one circumstance. In stanza 4, the poet begins the description of Eirik's battles: he tells how "the *din* of

swords waxed hot against the rims of the shields; the battle waxed about the king." "The sword's river (blood) ran;" and in stanza 5, "the ship ran in blood; but the wound boiled." Stanza 6 is very short, consisting of only four lines, and to my mind it may be regarded as a climax to what has gone before. It presents a picture of the battle as a whole: the result of the preceding statements. Therefore it would seem more appropriate for the poet to employ the general word battle-array than the specific words men's feet or knees. Again, *fit* is singular, the nominative plur. being *fitjar*; but this is perhaps of minor importance. What is to be specially dwelt upon is the poetical appropriateness of the first rendering. This rendering of Thorkelsson's, further, does no violence to the derivation, since *fit* is frequently used metaphorically for a plain or meadow, that which is stretched out (see Vigfusson, p. 155, and *Lexikon Poeticum*, page 173), and we often observe figures in Old Norse poetry formed by a comparison between men and objects of nature, so that to apply the same word to a line of men and an extended meadow would be quite in accordance with the train of thought of the Icelandic skald (*hræs-lavar*, 'haystacks of the slain,' 'heaps of,' *Höfudlausn*, II., a striking resemblance to meadow of men, battle-array; a man is often called a tree, etc.).

The arguments in favor of Thorkelsson's rendering of *firðar fit* therefore are; first, the artistic appropriateness, and secondly, the analogy with other figures. The rendering of the verse would then be:

"The battle-array receded at the spear-*din* (battle)."

DANIEL KILHAM DODGE.

Columbia College.

The Teaching of Modern Languages in Theory and Practice. Two Lectures, delivered in the University of Cambridge in the Lent term, 1887. By C. Colbeck, M. A., Assistant Master in Harrow School, late Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge.—From the University Press, 1887.

The appearance of a course of lectures, however brief, on the Teaching of Modern Languages, delivered in the University of Cam-

bridge by a late Fellow of Trinity, now Assistant-Master in one of the great Public Schools of England, is an encouraging sign of the "new era." The author says, in his modest preface, "There seems to be at last a disposition to regard seriously the pretensions of Modern Languages to a larger place in education"; and these lectures are interesting to us chiefly as the outcome of this "disposition," and a vindication—surely modest enough—of these "pretensions." It is well known that thus far the progress of modern language study in higher education has in the mother country lagged behind what, almost within the last decade, has been achieved among ourselves. This is due, mainly doubtless, to the greater authority and persistence of the wooden traditions of an exclusive classicism, backed as they have been by every kind of prescriptive advantage; but in part, doubtless, also to the greater proximity of the continent, and the larger demand, therefore, for such teaching only as should enable John Bull to inquire his way in Paris, or to browbeat the waiters along the Rhine. So the multitudinous "methods"—"natural" and unnatural, and largely in the hands of untrained tutors—have had firmer hold there; and the effort to place the modern languages upon a sound scientific, or at least pedagogical, basis has had to encounter, first, to a degree now happily unknown here, the blows inflicted in the house of its friends. And this not only in the lower ranks of the "native" teachers, who swarm in the United Kingdom, but even within the sacred shadows of the University; for we find Mr. Colbeck combating manfully the views of the "Master of Baliol," who thinks (p.11) that "Modern Languages can be [best] taught between the ages of six and ten, and not one language only but two, and even a third! and that the linguistic faculty is strongest at ten, and extinct at twenty." This, too, in a speech of welcome to the "Professeurs de Français at Oxford"—God save the mark! But under all these discouragements from below and above, these Lectures give ample evidence that the battle for the modern languages has begun in earnest, under earnest and able leaders; and one cannot doubt that victory, however delayed, will at last be certain and complete. It is as an in-

dication of the direction of this movement that this little book is specially interesting to us at home. We cannot follow its details, but shall only indicate its leading lines of argument.

In answer to the question—Why we teach Modern Languages? the author replies at once: "Because they are so supremely useful." This consideration, now more justly understood, has raised, he says, the study of modern languages "from the status of an accomplishment, or of a commercial art, on a level, let us say, with book-keeping, to rank as an integral portion of a liberal education" (p.3): and he proudly adds, in a spirit of prophetic if not of actual triumph, that "it is not one of the least of the honors of Cambridge that it has recognized that whatever study the world needs, a University should teach in all its breadth and fullness"—while, however, he confesses, "there is still (even in Cambridge) some trace of the old mistrust, I fear I must say, of the old contempt." The Modern Language Tripos, he tells us, "was dubbed a Courier Tripos," and the living languages were said to be "too trivial to be scholarly, too easy to be learned, too useful to be dignified." But it is encouraging to see that, even in Cambridge, our lecturer is not afraid to strike back, and knows how to hit hard. "How gladly and profitably would nine tenths of our middle classes exchange their little Latin and less Greek for a passable knowledge of even one modern language!" (p.5). Of the boys to whom we so laboriously teach Greek, he says (p.6), "we own that nine-tenths of them learn little, forget that little soon, and never touch a Greek book when once they leave school." To the claim that thereby we "train faculty," he replies that we should seek subjects of study "in which we may combine some actual knowledge with the bare power to know;" and he concludes (p.8): "Teach a boy Greek, *if* you can; but give him also, *because* you can, the power to read in the original" the masterpieces of modern literature that are found in the French and German languages. We have happily here passed that stage of the conflict; but it is well to know that our colleagues abroad are not deficient in the "noble art of self-defense," which means giving as well as taking blows.

When he comes to enumerate the elements of the utility which he claims for the modern languages, it is interesting to see that the lecturer places first the fact (p.5) that "a knowledge of French and German doubles and trebles the library whence knowledge may be drawn;" and in his analysis of method (p.10): *the teaching of reading*, he says, "I put that clearly first." He says (p.26) "I would always begin with a book" and claims (p.13) "that for all, young or old, the eye is incomparably the swifter gate to knowledge", and "it is the only means of rapidly acquiring accuracy." He insists that elementary (oral) work on languages should be confined to the mother tongue; and adds the important conclusion (p.16), "that the power of conversing in a foreign language can be acquired at least as easily late as early; that it is much less important than translation, much less important than composition, and that in learning it, at whatever age, we waste power if we proceed by *ear* only." Yet he does not undervalue the office of the ear, and adds an interesting paragraph on Dictation and Audition—that is, writing and listening from oral repetition;—but all these he holds to be subordinate to the main purpose of reading, and to the linguistic training and literary culture to be derived from the study of modern languages. Surely it is gratifying to see how closely the views which Mr. Colbeck represents are in accord with those formally enunciated by the Modern Language Association of America.*

Along the same line of thought the lecturer discusses frankly, yet very modestly, the question of native (English) or foreign teachers—a much more "burning" question in England, we may be sure, than (fortunately) it is now

with us. He admits the obvious retort, "vous êtes orfèvre, M. Josse"; but yet with allowance for illustrious exceptions—so numerous, let us thankfully add, in our own country—he does not hesitate to conclude: "I think that English teachers produce considerably the best results." In his careful and candid analysis of this question, he says (p.30): "The Englishman knows his boys' difficulties. He knows what not to teach, what to begin by teaching, and where to lay stress. He looks at the task from the same side as his pupils," etc.; and as to the much vaunted use of the foreign tongue in the class room, he adds: "The round of remarks which it involves is very limited: Lisez, traduisez, asseyez-vous, continuez, répétez, a-t-il raison? vous avez tort; Aufgepasst, sprechen sie deutlich, kein dummes Zeug, soon degenerate into jargon". Can this be a true picture? If not, it is heresy of the worst kind! Perhaps it were better it should be true; for, surely, it seems to us that in the brief hours assigned to class-room work, of which every minute should be precious, that language should be used which speaks quickest and clearest to the most immediate intelligence of the pupil. But if Mr. Colbeck tells us the worst, there is not so much harm done after all.

In this notice, already too prolonged, we have confined our attention only to the leading points of the first lecture, of 31 pages. Besides what we have noted, there is much of interesting suggestion and criticism on questions of method, with glances at some of the best-known systems. The second lecture, of 54 pages, is devoted mainly to details of instruction, and contains many striking and ingenious suggestions. These, it may be remarked, may be usefully compared with a paper by Miss Brackett, in the last number of the (Syracuse) *Academy*. Mr. Colbeck's style is bright and breezy. The entire little book is eminently readable, with temptations to quote throughout, as we have already done beyond our proper limits. Without endorsing all of its arguments—as, for example, what is said of the Historical, or "Mediæval," study of Modern Languages—we commend the book heartily to all teachers of Modern Languages, and we wish Mr. Colbeck and his colleagues God-speed in their good work.

EDWARD S. JOYNES.

South Carolina College.

*Since these lines were written the views of Mr. Colbeck—representing Cambridge—have received confirmation from another source, of still higher authority—representing Oxford. In a paper on *Literature and Language*, in the *Contemporary Review* reprinted in the *Eclectic Magazine* for December, 1887, Prof. Edward A. Freeman, the historian, writes, with reference to the new Chair at Oxford: "We may fairly lay down that it is the business of an (*sic*) University to teach men the scholarly knowledge of languages;—that it is not its business to teach men their practical mastery." And again: "The gift of talking this or that language is not one which comes within the scope of an University: it is no part of the scientific study of the language." We wish we could quote more largely; but this suffices to show the *consensus* of opinion, in the highest quarters, as to the true direction of modern language study for higher education in England. It is of course superfluous to recommend the reading of the whole of Prof. Freeman's paper.